

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method for production of metallic powder, the method comprising:

reducing metal chloride continuously by contacting the metal chloride gas and reducing gas, and

cooling metallic powder generated by the reducing process by inert gas continuously, wherein the inert gas is blown from one or more parts around a flow passage of the metallic powder to generate a vortex flow.

2. (Currently Amended) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ the method comprising:

reducing metal chloride continuously by contacting the metal chloride gas and reducing gas, and

cooling metallic powder generated by the reducing process by inert gas continuously, wherein the inert gas is blown from one or more parts around a flow passage of the metallic powder to generate a vortex flow ~~is generated in the~~ vertically downward direction.

3. (Currently Amended) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 1, wherein the parts ~~at~~ from which inert gas is blown are not less than four at equal intervals.

4. (Original) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 1, wherein the blowing direction of inert gas is inclined at 5 to 25 degrees from the horizontal direction.

5. (Original) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 1, wherein the supplied amount of the inert gas is 5 NI/min per 1 g of the metallic powder.

6. (Original) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 1, wherein the temperature of the inert gas is set at from 0 to 100°C.

7. (Original) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 1, wherein the metal chloride gas is generated by contacting chlorine gas continuously with solid metal, or by heating and evaporating solid metal chloride.

8. (Currently Amended) The method for production of metallic powder, the method comprising:

reducing metal chloride continuously by contacting the metal chloride gas and reducing gas,

conducting a first cooling process comprising cooling metallic powder generated by the reducing process by inert gas continuously, wherein the inert gas is blown from one or more parts around a first portion of a flow passage of the metallic powder to generate a vortex flow, and

conducting a secondary cooling process comprising further cooling the metallic powder cooled by the first cooling process by inert gas continuously,

wherein the inert gas is blown from one or more parts around a second portion of a flow passage of the metallic powder downstream of the first portion to generate a vortex flow.

9. (Currently Amended) The method for production for metallic powder ~~according to claim 1, wherein the method comprising:~~

reducing metal chloride continuously by contacting the metal chloride gas and reducing gas, and

cooling metallic powder generated by the reducing process by inert gas continuously, wherein the inert gas is blown from one or more parts around a flow passage of the metallic powder to generate a vortex flow and wherein inert gas flow is generated in a downward direction along the inner wall of the reducing furnace continuously during the production of the metallic powder.

10-17. (Canceled).

18. (Currently Amended) The method for production of metallic powder ~~according to claim 8, wherein, in the secondary cooling process, the~~ the method comprising:

reducing metal chloride continuously by contacting the metal chloride gas and reducing gas,

conducting a first cooling process comprising cooling metallic powder generated by the reducing process by inert gas continuously, wherein the inert gas is blown from one or more parts around a flow passage of the metallic powder to generate a vortex flow, and

conducting a secondary cooling process comprising further cooling the metallic powder cooled by the first cooling process by inert gas continuously, wherein the inert gas is blown from one or more parts around a flow passage of the metallic powder to generate a vortex flow ~~is generated~~ in the vertically downward direction.

19. (Currently Amended) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 8, wherein, in the secondary cooling process, the parts from ~~at~~ which inert gas is blown are not less than four at equal intervals.

20. (Previously Presented) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 8, wherein, in the secondary cooling process, the blowing direction of inert gas is inclined at 5 to 25 degrees from the horizontal direction.

21. (Previously Presented) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 8, wherein, in the secondary cooling process, the supplied amount of the inert gas is 5 NI/min per 1 g of the metallic powder.

22. (Previously Presented) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 8, wherein, in the secondary cooling process, the temperature of the inert gas is set at from 0 to 100°C.

23. (New) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 1, wherein each blowing direction of the inert gas from one or more parts is inclined from a normal line of circumference surface of the cooling process part to some

extent in the horizontal direction and is also inclined from the normal line to some extent in the vertical direction.

24. (New) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 1, wherein each blowing direction of the inert gas from one or more parts is inclined from a normal line of circumference surface of the cooling process part to some extent in the horizontal direction and is not inclined from the normal line in the vertical direction.

25. (New) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 1, wherein reducing the metal chloride continuously and cooling the metallic powder generated by the reducing process are both performed in a single reduction furnace.

26. (New) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 1, wherein the vortex flow is generated almost uniformly at any position within a cooling process part of the flow passage.

27. (New) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 26, wherein the inert gas is blown from a plurality of parts around the flow passage.

28. (New) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 27, wherein the plurality of parts are arranged at equal intervals around the flow passage.

29. (New) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 28, wherein each blowing direction of the inert gas from plurality of parts is inclined from a normal line of circumference surface of the cooling process part to some extent in the horizontal direction and is not inclined from the normal line in the vertical direction.

30. (New) The method for production of metallic powder according to claim 8, wherein reducing the metal chloride continuously, the first cooling process and the secondary cooling process are all performed in a single reduction furnace.